

City of Martinsburg, WV
Citizen Participation Plan – FY 2019-2023
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Program

Public Participation is required to assist with the identification and development of the community development and housing needs in the City of Martinsburg. In compliance with 24 CFR 91.105, The City of Martinsburg is required to adopt a Citizen Participation Plan. The Plan must include the City's policies and procedures for involving residents and stakeholders in the CDBG and HOME planning and implementation process. The Plan should encourage residents, especially the low-to-moderate residents to express their concerns and needs. The Citizen Plan should identify the steps of public involvement and the process for gathering input and consultation with the public. The Citizen Plan should be updated every 5 years.

The City prepares a five-year Consolidated Plan for the CDBG and HOME programs outlining local needs and priorities, strategies to address these needs, and proposed program goals. The City prepares an annual action plan outlining its proposed expenditures of CDBG and HOME funds for each new fiscal year. The annual plans must support the overall goals and objectives of the 5-year plan. The city conducts an Analysis of Impediments in conjunction with the 5 Year Comprehensive Plan to identify and assess the fair housing barriers from the citizens of Martinsburg and this assessment is incorporated into the 5-year Comprehensive Plan in order to address and reduce any barriers. The City prepares the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) at the end of each fiscal year in order to evaluate the city's success in utilizing the CDBG and HOME funds.

These plans sometimes need to be altered or amended because of changing community development and housing needs of Martinsburg. The annual plans can be amended to address any new needs. The Participation Plan will address substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan and how to involve the citizenry in the process.

The City of Martinsburg, West Virginia receives an annual allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Development (HUD). The City of Martinsburg became an entitlement community for the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program in 2004. This entitles the city to make direct annual funding requests to HUD to address community development and housing needs. This allows the flexibility to address the unique needs of our community.

The City of Martinsburg has received over \$5.6 Million CDBG funds. The **primary objective** of the CDBG program is to provide housing, community and economic development for low- and -moderate income persons (70 % of the expenditures of the grant) by providing decent housing; a suitable living environment; and expand economic opportunities.

The primary objective of the CDBG program is to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low- and moderate-income.

Funds must be used to carry out activities for one of the three broad National Objectives:

- benefit low and moderate-income persons;
- aid in the prevention or elimination of slum and blight; or
- meet other community development needs of particular urgency.

The CDBG program includes several restrictions and requirements on annual expenditures:

- 20% cap on administration and planning costs
- 15% cap on public services
- 70% of all expenditures must benefit low and moderate- income persons or neighborhoods
- CDBG expenditures must be made in a “timely” fashion – no more than 1.5 times the annual allocation must be unexpended 30 days prior to the end of the program’s fiscal year.

HOME is the largest Federal block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to create **affordable housing for low-income** households. The City of Martinsburg has been participating with the HOME Program since 2007. The City of Martinsburg has received \$5.5 million for housing assistance for the City of Martinsburg; Berkeley County; Jefferson County; and Morgan County , the majority of which goes to support the Eastern Panhandle HOME Consortium of West Virginia Homebuyer Assistance Program Consortium to assist first time homebuyers with gap financing to purchase their first home. We have assisted 297 first time homebuyers as of March 2020 and the HOME funds have leveraged **\$38,841,150 in home sales** and buyers had obtained **\$35,472,559 in mortgage loans** – a ratio of **\$1: \$9.12** in mortgage funding for each HAP dollar expended.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The City of Martinsburg will encourages interested persons; groups; and/or organizations to participate in the public participation process of the CDBG and HOME programs. To the greatest extent possible, the city shall develop the involvement of low-and-moderate income persons within the city; the residents within the potential CDBG funded projects area; residents of predominantly low and very low income individuals and families; residents living in public and assisted housing developments; persons with disabilities; minorities and non-English speaking low and moderate income residents; the elderly; residents living in slum and blighted areas; and all persons impacted or affected by the CDBG or HOME program. The City will shall take steps to encourage the participation of local and regional organizations; HUD Continuum of Care grantees; businesses; landlords; developers; nonprofit organizations; and community and faith-based organizations. The City shall reach out to the Martinsburg Housing Authority and other housing organizations and boards within the City limits. The City shall try a variety of public involvement techniques including the use of focus groups; mail; internet surveys and communication; personal outreach; any other innovative tools and techniques that can be utilized to obtain input from various demographic groups within the city; video conferencing capabilities; and special needs for person with handicaps; disabilities; and non-English speaking residents when requested to give adequate time to provide these resources.

The City of Martinsburg advocates the participation of its residents in the process of developing:

1. The Comprehensive 5 Year Consolidated Plan (the current one FY 2019-2023 is attached);
2. The Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing;
3. The Annual Action Plan for CDBG and HOME funds;
4. Substantial Amendments to the Plan;
5. Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER);
6. Citizen Participation Plan;

Copies of the Citizen Plan; the listed plans; the summaries of the basic information pertaining to these plans will be made available upon request to the CDBG and HOME Administrator. Public Notices will be published and available.

PROGRAM YEAR

The City of Martinsburg’s fiscal program year runs on a twelve-month period from July 1 to June 30th of each year. The HUD Program year follows the federal fiscal year calendar from October 1st to September 30th. The reporting data requirements of the HUD CDBG and HOME programs follows the federal calendar. The receiving of federal funds to the City of Martinsburg follows the federal fiscal calendar year.

COMMENT PERIOD

The City of Martinsburg encourages its citizens to comment during the development of the Consolidated 5 Year Plan; the Analysis of Impediment to Fair Housing; all Substantial Amendments; the CAPER Evaluation report; and the Citizen Plan prior to submission to HUD. The citizen’s input will be included in these plans. The comment period for the plans will be accordingly:

ITEM	COMMENT
The Comprehensive 5 Year Consolidated Plan	30 days
The Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing	30 days
The Annual Action Plan for CDBG and HOME funds	30 days
Substantial Amendments to the Plan	30 days
Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report (CAPER)	15 days
Citizen Participation Plan	15 days
Disaster Relief Substantial Amend/ Annual Plan CDBG-CV	5 days

The City will consider any comments of residents, citizens received in writing or orally during the comment period and at the public hearings in preparing the 5 -year Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, CAPER, and any Substantial Amendments.

PUBLIC NOTICES

The legal notices will be placed in the local newspapers such as the Martinsburg Journal and other local publications; the public library; the County Court; City Hall; and put on the city’s website. Copies will be made available to any interested citizen or group that request it.

Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans

The City of Martinsburg prepares a Consolidated Plan on a five-year basis as required by HUD to assess the community characteristics and needs to help identify the community development and housing priorities that the City should do during the following five-year period. This is done in conjunction with the Analysis of Impediments to fair housing to assess the fair housing barriers of the residents of Martinsburg. The current five-year plan is FY 2019 to FY 2023.

The City prepares Annual Action Plan to cover a single year within the Consolidated Plan to fund specific projects and proposals that will be funded with the CDBG and HOME grant funds.

The City encourages residents and stakeholders in the planning process for the Consolidated Plan, the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, and the Annual Plan.

To begin the 5-year planning process for the Consolidated Plan, the City conducts a needs assessment. The purpose of the needs assessment is to receive citizens' opinion and input to various question pertaining to housing and community development needs as well as identify any barriers to fair housing.

In addition to the needs survey the City holds a public hearing to obtain and discuss community and housing needs of the community to include the low-and -moderate income residents and neighborhoods.

The City of Martinsburg will provide at a minimum:

1. The application process;
2. List of eligibility requirements;
3. Time table for submittal;
4. Proposed and final funding amounts for CDBG and HOME funds;
5. List of potential activities to benefit low-and-moderate income residents or clientele;
6. 5-Year Plan and Strategic Goals;
7. Previous year's accomplishments; outcomes; and progress.

The application and request for proposal for funding for the Annual Plan are sent to the human service organizations and services and various organizations that represent the low-and-moderate income residents and clientele of the City. The application is posted on the city of Martinsburg website: <http://cityofmartinsburg.org/community-development/>.

Applicants are given up to 30 days to complete the application and submit it to the CDBG and HOME Administrator of the City. If any technical assistance is needed in submitting an application, please request it prior to the due date of the application so the organization can thoroughly understand the requirements in case they want to apply for funds. The organization must assist the low and moderate residents in the City of Martinsburg.

The City of Martinsburg prepares the Annual Action Plan and makes available to the public the estimated amount of CDBG and HOME funds that the city expects to receive along with a description of the range of types of activities that can be funded using these funds to benefit low- and moderate-income residents. The city holds its first public hearing at the City of Martinsburg. Then it holds 3 HOME Public Hearings one in Berkeley County; one in Jefferson County; and one in Morgan County to receive feedback and input for the housing needs of the Eastern Panhandle HOME Consortium of West Virginia. In these public hearings, the citizens in the 3 counties are given the opportunity to express their housing needs. They are given a recap of the progress of the Homebuyers Assistance Program and other HOME expenditures. Once HUD has released the actual funding amounts for both CDBG and HOME funds then the City will continue the Annual Plan process and put it on public display for a period of 30 days. The review period will be no less than 30 days, unless granted waivers from HUD for an emergency or disaster relief.

A summary of comments received will be published with the final Consolidated Plan and action plan. A 4th and final public hearing will be held to obtain public comment on the final Consolidated and Annual Action Plan.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The City will conduct at least 3 public hearing per year to receive the public's input into the City's CDBG and HOME programs and to give the public updated information on these programs. Public hearing notices shall be submitted to the local newspapers following the comment period listed previously. The Public hearings are held to address the community development and housing needs of the city residents, review the proposed uses of funds; review the eligibility of what can be funded; and review what was spent the previous program year.

Public hearings will be held at a time convenient to most people in the community and at a location convenient to most people who may benefit from the use of funds but also accessible by persons with disabilities.

Each participant who wishes to attend the public hearing shall sign the sign in sheet. Verbal comments shall not go over 5 minutes. Written responses or by electronic mail can be added to the public record.

Please submit comments to:

Nancy Strine

CDBG & HOME Administrator

City of Martinsburg

232 North Queen Street

Martinsburg, WV 25401

Tel 304-264-2131 x 278

Fax 304-264-2136

nstrine@cityofmartinsburg.org

AMENDMENTS

Occasionally it might be necessary to change the use of some of the funds or priorities budgeted in the current Action Plan. If so, then a Substantial Amendment, will be proposed and acted on. The City will begin the Substantial Amendment process if:

1. A change is made in its allocation priorities;
2. A change in the its methods of distribution of funds;
3. A new activity is added from the 5-year Consolidated Plan;
4. A change in the purpose, substantial scope change, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.
5. Any monetary change in a current budget item that is over 25% of the total CDBG or HOME total allocation.

The City will publish the legal notification for the Substantial Amendment not less 30 days prior to holding the public hearing. The notice will summarize the nature of the proposed amendment, the date, time, and location of the public hearing, and the process for submitting comments. The City will consider all comments and views of the residents submitting in writing or orally. The amendment will not be approved or implemented until the comment period has lapsed. The comments will be added to the Annual Action Plan.

MINOR AMENDMENTS

A minor amendment is reallocating unspent funds less than 25% of the total CDBG or HOME allocation. A CDBG public improvement project may have funds remaining if the project came under budget or there might be a need for additional dollars if the project has exceeded the original budget estimate.

The Eastern Panhandle HOME Consortium can make recommendations at the 4th quarter of the HOME funds to reallocate any HAP loan funding from one county to another based on needs and demands. A resolution amendment will be brought to the Mayor and Council to complete the minor amendment for either CDBG or HOME funds.

PERFORMANCE REPORTS

After a Program Year is complete, the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) must be drafted for public review and comment before being submitted to HUD. A comment of no more than 15 days is provided for each CAPER. The CAPER goes on public display and citizens and residents are encouraged to comment. All comments are published in the final CAPER report.

The City of Martinsburg's program year ends June 30th, our CAPER reports are due 90 days after the end of the program year which would be September 30th.

COMPLAINTS

The City will respond within 15 days to any written resident complaint and/or question.

CARES ACT AMENDMENT

The City of Martinsburg received notification on April 13, 2020 that they will be receiving \$210,613 in CDBG funds through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (C.A.R.E.S Act). This CARES Act funding is referred to as CDBG-CV. The CARES Act provides flexibility for Entitlement Communities such as Martinsburg, WV to use CDBG and CDBG-CV during Program Years 2019 and 2020. This CARES Act authorizes HUD to grant waivers and give alternative requirements of statutes and regulations in connection with the use of CDBG-CV funds and fiscal year 2019 and 2020 funds except for the requirements dealing with fair housing; nondiscrimination; labor standards; and environment. Waivers and these alternative requirements can be granted to expedite and facilitate the use of funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus.

The City of Martinsburg has submitted and received approval for the following waivers:

Citizen Participation

The comment period for amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan, the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan (s); and Substantial Amendments as they relate to CDBG-CV shall be a minimum of 5 days. During this time period, the public will have an opportunity to submit comments orally, in writing, or via electronic platforms as will be directed in the public notice. Comment periods for both the FY 2020 Substantial Amendment for the CDBG-CV, the FY 2020 Annual Plan, and revisions to the Citizen Plan may run concurrently. If Amendments are needed for the 5-year Consolidated Plan

FY 2019-2023 they will be made in the 5-day public comment period. All questions that are received during this 5-day comment period will be responded to in a timely fashion and added to the public record of the FY 2020 CDBG-CV Substantial Amendment and the FY 2020 Annual Plan.

Public Hearings

Virtual public hearings are allowed under these circumstances:

- National/local health authorities recommend social distancing and limiting public gatherings for public health reasons;
- Virtual hearings provide reasonable notification and access for citizens in accordance with the grantee's certifications, timely responses from local officials to all citizen questions and issues, and public access to all questions and responses.

A public notice for the public hearing will be published in at least one local newspaper with no less than five days prior to the hearing. The same notice will be published to the City of Martinsburg's website , <http://cityofmartinsburg.org/community-development>. The public notice will be sent to the social services and stakeholder groups to further publicize the hearing. They can utilize their communication networks to get the word out to their individuals and member organizations.

CDBG-CV activities

Eligible CDBG-CV activities may include, but not be limited to, **Public Service** activities assisting low-and-moderate income households and/or clientele. The 15% public service cap has been waived during the emergency and applies to both the FY 2020 Substantial Amendment to incorporate the CDBG-CV funds and the FY 2020 Annual CDBG Plan. **Public Improvements** to include acquisition, construction, or installation of public works, facilities, and site or other improvements or rehabilitation of building or improvements; and **Economic Development** assistance to small businesses such as provide grants or loans to create or retain jobs.

The FY 2020-21 Annual Action Plan

The FY 2020-2021 Annual Action Plan will be amended to allow the City of Martinsburg to receive and administer the \$210,613 in CDBG-CV funds made available through the CARES Act. These funds may be used to prevent or prepare for the spread of coronavirus 19 (COVID-19) and respond and facilitate assistance to eligible city households, persons, non profit agencies that serve the low and moderate income city residents; and eligible city small businesses that have been economically impacted by COVID-19. If the city would receive any additional funds by HUD through the CARES Act it will be utilized for the same purpose of the original allocation.

Eligible CDBG costs incurred and paid for with nonfederal funds may be repaid with CDBG or CDBG-CV funds regardless of the date the costs were incurred. These pre-awards costs must meet all HUD requirements applicable to CDBG.

PERFORMANCE REPORTS WAIVER

HUD has issued on April 29, 2020, a waiver for the submission of the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) due date. Originally, the CAPER submissions are due 90 days after the end of our program date which is the end of September. Now HUD is allowing these CAPER submissions to be submitted no later than 180 days after the end of the program year which is December 2020.

6/15/2020

Nancy Strine, CDBG and HOME Administrator

DRAFT